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SPORTS

Winchester wrestlers Napadow Baquero, Donlon advance to the All-New England Tournament in Providence on Saturday

JOE MCCONNELL | SPORTS EDITOR

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Winchester High wrestling Head Coach Ryan Errico, left, and assistant coach Tomi Uyehara flank Eddie Donlon, Kai Napadow Baquero and senior captain Ilyas Malik after the All-State Meet at Springfield's Mass Mutual Center last weekend. Napadow Baquero (120-pounds) and Donlon (138-pounds) finished advance to the All-New England Tournament on Saturday, March 7, in Providence. COURTESY PHOTO/WINCHESTER HIGH SCHOOL

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After a long season of scheduled league matches and independent tournaments, a select group of teams and individuals, who made it through the grind, descended upon Springfield's Mass Mutual Center on March 1 and 2 to participate in the annual All-State Meet.

They all worked hard to qualify for this penultimate event on the high school wrestling calendar that pits the best against the best in each weight class to see who comes out on top as a state champion.

The Top 7 in each weight class will then keep on practicing to get ready for the March 7 All-New England Regional Meet in Providence.

"We had a great weekend in Springfield, which featured some of the toughest competition that we have seen this year," said Assistant Coach Vitaly Napadow.

The Red & Black brought three to the All-States, and placed two – Kai Napadow Baquero and Eddie Donlan – that also includes them qualifying for the regionals.

The All-States consist of the top five high school grapplers in each weight class from the state's three divisions that was determined at the divisional meet the previous week.

On his way to the finals, Napadow Baquero, at 120-pounds, defeated the Division 2 and Division 3 state champions in the quarterfinals and semifinals. But in the finals, he lost to the Division 1 state champ, while also making history to become the first WHS wrestler since Travis Tremblay in 2004 to reach the final round. In order to get there, he had to upset the Division 2 champ from Melrose in the quarterfinals after losing to him several times throughout his scholastic career.

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Former legendary Winchester and current Melrose coach Larry Tremblay, the winningest wrestling coach in New England, is Travis' dad, and ironically Kai accomplished the feat with Larry on the opposing sideline and his dad Vitaly, an assistant on Head Coach Ryan Errico's staff, instructing him all the way through the process.

Dad Vitaly loved the symmetry of the historical moment, and how it came "full-circle" with Larry involved in the story.

"Donlon (138-pounds) also had a great tournament, going 3-2, to place in the All-States for the first time with a seventh-place finish," said Napadow. "He beat some very tough opponents, and lost only to the eventual state champion and the Division 3 champ. But nonetheless, he will see his season continue for one more tournament, which is a huge accomplishment."

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Senior captain Ilyas Malik (175-pounds), unfortunately, was struck by injury, but stayed around to cheer on his teammates. He has had a fantastic four years, finishing up with a 107-40 record that includes going 44-7 this season. He was the captain of the team the last two years, and a two-time sectional champion.

"(Malik) has meant so much to this program throughout his entire high school career," said Napadow.

The Top 7 Massachusetts wrestlers in each weight class are once again heading to Providence on Saturday, March 7, to participate in the regionals, including Napadow Baquero and Donlon. They will go up against the top five from Connecticut, and three each from Rhode Island, Vermont, New Hampshire and Maine.

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"I know Kai and Eddie will wrestle hard and give it their all, no matter who they draw," said Napadow.

The entire team will next get together on Wednesday, April 8 at Winchester's Wright-Locke Farm for the traditional end-of-the-year awards banquet.

Joe McConnell is a longtime, award-winning sports editor for numerous North Shore publications. He began covering Winchester sports for the News in November 2024 and is currently its Sports Editor. He can be reached at editor@winchesternews.org.

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Following successful Winchester boys basketball team

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season at its annual awards night

It's been three weeks since the Winchester High boys hockey team (12-10-2, 17th seed) last suited up to play a game. It was against Catholic Memorial (19-3-1, top seed) in the Round of 16 on Feb. 28 at Allston's Warrior Ice Arena. The game was rather competitive throughout,

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March 24, 2026

reconvenes for awards

After three months of games and daily practices, the Winchester High boys basketball team was able to rack up 17 wins, while losing just five times, which included going 1-1 in the Division 1 state tournament. They ended up being eliminated by host Bridgewater-Raynham in the Sweet 16, 71-42 on

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SPORTS

State champion Alex Lam, Dunavan Pulli put Winchester youth wrestling on New England map after top finishes

Behind every successful high school athletic department, there usually lies established youth sports organizations where athletes sign up via their parents to learn the nuances of the sport. In Winchester, Coach Ryan Errico's high school wrestling program recently concluded another fine season that was filled with team and individual

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March 19, 2026

SPORTS

Winchester High wrestlers Napadow Baquero, Donlon complete scholastic careers on the mat with two wins each

The final and most prestigious high school wrestling tournament of the year is now in the books. Last weekend's All-New England Meet, held annually in Providence, R.I., marked the end of another year for the sport that started all the way back on the Monday after Thanksgiving. The

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NEWS

Winchester ZBA waives town regulations to move Washington/Swanton project along

Town officials have approved waivers of regulations for a residential/commercial development project at Washington and Swanton streets. The Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) on March 19 approved the waivers for a 40B project at 278-292 Washington St. and 12 and 16-20 Swanton St. in a special meeting preceding a

NEIL ZOLOT | CORRESPONDENT

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NEWS

John Bellaire, 22, among youngest townwide winners in Winchester history

He won all eight precincts after a door-to-door campaign that emphasized direct voter contact over institutional backing.

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EVENTS

Network for Social Justice to celebrate 35th anniversary

EVENTS

Winchester Community Music School presents Jazz

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The following was submitted by the Network for Social Justice: The Network For Social Justice turns 35 this spring! There will be a celebration on Saturday, April 11, from 7-9:30 p.m., at the Sons of Italy, 117 Swanton St., Winchester. Connect with your local friends and neighbors as

March 25, 2026

The following was submitted by the Winchester Community Music School: On Saturday, March 28, join the community at Winchester Community Music School, 407 Highland Ave., for a Jazz Jam Session, an afternoon of fun, spontaneous jazz playing, beginning at 3 p.m. Instrumentalists and vocalists of all skill levels are

March 25, 2026

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